



Wycombe's Howard Kennedy (left) whips the ball away from Middlesbrough forward Alan Foggon at Ayresome Park last night.

## Late goal by Armstrong breaks deadlock

By DOUGLAS PEACOCK

Middlesbrough ..... 1 Wycombe Wanderers 0

SHOWING composure and skill which belied their non-League status, Wycombe Wanderers denied the might of First Division Middlesbrough for 89 minutes of this pulsating, action-packed replay at Ayresome Park last night.

A last minute goal by David Armstrong, who burst through a wall of Wycombe defenders, ended the deadlock that had looked like continuing into extra time.

There was no doubt that Middlesbrough deserved their victory, considering the amount of pressure they exerted in the final quarter of the game. But there is no doubt, too, that the Isthmian League side deserved the chants of "Wycombe, Wycombe" from the 30,000 Teesside supporters as they left the field.

### Diving save

They had fought bravely in defence, frustrated Middlesbrough's ambitions in midfield, and displayed aggression and intelligence in attack. This was a performance which would not have disgraced any First Division side.

Wycombe manager Brian Lee was only stating the obvious when he said afterwards "They know they have been in a game."

With Mead and Phillips, the captain, tackling tenaciously, and Hand and Reardon marking their men tightly, Middlesbrough were forced to use all their power to break down one of the strongest defences they have met this season.

Starting with a flourish that looked like sweeping the amateurs off the field, they became more and more frustrated as all their efforts were denied.

Wycombe might have scored

themselves when Kennedy sent in a powerful 30-yard shot which brought a diving save from Platt, who did well again a few minutes later to stop a fierce volley from Perrin.

The best chances, however, continued to fall to the home side. Armstrong fired high from an easy position and Maskell pulled off a remarkable save from Souness. Only a desperate clearance by Phillips kept out another shot from Armstrong.

But it was in the final 15 minutes that the game came hurtling to life. Twice Hickton drove against the crossbar, and Maskell was forced to produce a string of first-class saves from Middlesbrough's forwards.

One, in particular, denied substitute Willey an almost certain goal and Middlesbrough supporters groaned as Armstrong fired another fierce shot against a post.

It seemed that Wycombe's bravery must surely lead to extra time, but with only seconds of the game left, Armstrong found the space that had eluded himself and his colleagues all night to fire past the previously unbeatable Wycombe goalkeeper.

Middlesbrough manager Jack Charlton echoed the feelings of many when he said: "Thank goodness that that is all over."

**Middlesbrough:** Platt; Craggs, Spraggon, Souness, Roam, Maddren, Charlton, Mills, Hickton, Foggon (Willey, 60), Armstrong.

**Wycombe Wanderers:** Maskell; Birdseye, Hand, Mead, Phillips, Reardon, Perrin, Kennedy, Searle, Hollfield, Horseman (Dylan, 74).